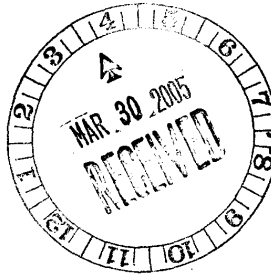




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Senior General Attorney

March 30, 2005

via fax 202-565-9004 (2 pages)
Original and 10 copies via mail

Honorable Vernon A. Williams
Secretary
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423

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Office of Proceedings

MAR 31 2005
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Public Record

Re: STB Docket No. AB-290 (Sub-No. 240X), Norfolk Southern Railway
Company - Abandonment Exemption - In Gaston County, NC -
Request for Extension of Consummation Date Deadline

Dear Mr. Williams:

Norfolk Southern Railway Company (NSR) hereby requests that the Board grant NSR an 8-month extension of the deadline date, from April 11, 2005 to December 9, 2005, to consummate abandonment of the rail line that was the subject of NSR's petition for exemption in this docket. That date will be one year from the original deadline date for consummation of the abandonment specified in the Board's decision served December 9, 2003. The subject line extends between milepost HG-47.0 at Gastonia, NC and milepost HG-52.0 at Dallas (Gebo), NC in Gaston County, NC. In a decision served December 1, 2004, the Board granted NSR a 4-month extension of the deadline date for consummation of the abandonment. NSR and other interested parties have made progress on a plan for disposition of the line, but the brief additional time period proved insufficient for them to reach a final agreement.

NSR has been discussing the possibility of conveying the line to the North Carolina Railroad Company (NCR) as a line of railroad or for railbanking in some form. The parties also have been discussing the disposition of the line with the City of Gastonia, which previously had filed a request for an interim trail use negotiation condition. NSR previously stated that consideration would be given to negotiation for interim trail use of the right-of-way if an agreement inconsistent with such use were not reached with the NCR. While NSR and NCR have had ongoing discussions about this matter, more recently they have included the City of Gastonia. In fact, the three

Mr. Vernon A. Williams
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parties have scheduled a meeting on April 8, 2005 to further discuss this project. Evaluation of the facts, circumstances and options concerning the disposition and future of the right-of-way have taken longer than originally anticipated, but we believe satisfactory progress has been made and an agreement can be reached within the next several months. While the inclusion of the City in the discussions may appear to have contributed to some additional delay in reaching a final plan for disposition of the line, we expect the City's participation will help produce a satisfactory result for all interested parties. We believe that further consideration and negotiation concerning the future of the line should result in a more favorable disposition for local interests than straight abandonment of the line, but it will take the parties additional time to reach that result.

We have no reason to believe the requested extension of the deadline date would result in any adverse effect on any party. In fact, the additional time will help facilitate negotiations that might lead to preservation of the right-of-way as a line of railroad or an interim trail. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,


James R. Paschall

cc: via fax (704) 854-6607

Honorable Jennifer T. Stultz, Mayor
City of Gastonia
P. O. Box 1748
Gastonia, NC 28053-1748

cc via e-mail:

Mr. Scott M. Saylor, President
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cc via e-mail:

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Mr. D. M. Mazur	Mr. R. P. Dietz
Mr. M. C. Kirchner	Mr. W. L. Barringer
Mr. R. L. Williams	Mr. G. A. Meade